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SUBJECT: PER – SAFETY AND HEALTH

Purpose. To transmit the November Safety and Health Bulletin prepared by Paul Bridgland, Area Engineer at Marshall Area Office.

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### Night Time Vehicle Safety

Shorter days, end of Daylight Savings Time and holiday travel add to more time spent driving in the dark. It is very important at this time to have properly functioning vehicle lights to prevent accidents. In addition to illuminating a driver's vision, vehicle lights help to avoid accidents, by signaling a driver's intentions to other motorists and pedestrians.

Most automotive lights are simply bulbs, smaller but similar to the ones found in the home. As such, they're easy to replace after they burn out or damaged by road debris.

To insure that all of your vehicle lights are working properly, turn on all the lights. Test the turn signals, the brake lights and the hazards lights. If any of the lights aren't working, replace the bulb. If after replacing the bulb, the light still doesn't work check the fuse panel for burned out fuses. For passenger safety, make sure that the interior lamps illuminate and don't forget any under-hood bulbs, as well as the trunk lamp and glove box bulb.

Here are few more ways to be more prepared for safe driving at night:

- Make sure that all lights are clean and headlights are aimed properly.
- Use extra vigilance at night, pedestrian deaths are highest between the hours of 9p.m. and 6a.m., and more than half of all motor vehicle deaths involving teenagers occur between those hours.
- Consider replacing standard headlights with street legal, high intensity discharge (HID) headlights or halogen lights that increase visibility significantly.
- Turn on headlights at dusk. Even if they don't increase your field of vision at the time, other drivers will be able to see you better.

- Use high beams whenever possible to increase sight distance. However, always use low beams when encountering traffic to avoid blinding other drivers.
- Watch the right edge of the lane you're traveling in to minimize blindness from oncoming headlights.
- Realize that darkness impairs vision, thereby increasing reaction times and making other vehicles' speeds harder to judge. Drive slower and leave more space between your vehicle and traffic. Ask passenger to serve as additional sets of eyes to look for curves, hills, dips, and deer.
- If you experience car trouble, pull as far off the road as is safely possible. Always use hazard lights to warn other motorists. If you drive at night often, consider carrying orange reflective triangles or road flares. Also, contemplate adding auxiliary driving lights, such as fog lights, to your vehicle.
- Drunk driving increases at night, particularly on weekends. Drive even more defensively during these times, avoiding vehicles that are being driven erratically.

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DIST: AE